

21 THINGS YOU CAN DO TO IMPROVE YOUR TEAMS EFFECTIVENESS

Imagine what your team would look like if you committed to enacting one small 1% improvement action each week for the next year. That 1% per week would result in a 67.7% improvement in your teams' performance.

Below you will find a list of 21 simple things you could do to improve your teams' skills, knowledge and attitude over the next year. Look through the list and pick one to implement this week and start the journey to improved performance.

- 1** Greet your team members every morning. Too often people just arrive at the office and within minutes are frantically catching up on emails or running off to meetings. Your greatest asset in your organisation are the people in your team so take a few minutes to warmly greet each one by their name and notice if there is something you can connect with them about. For example people appreciate if you notice a haircut, a new tie, or if they are looking tired and need to be shown some extra care and concern.
- 2** Do yourself a huge favour and go watch at least the first 20 minutes of the LinkedIn talk by Fred Kofman at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IdMvWLARF1w> and discover what your job really is. How you view your job will change the way you work with your team.
- 3** Approach a team leader you respect and ask them out for a coffee and ask them what they do to lead such a great team, then just listen. Ask them if they would be willing to go out for a coffee every six weeks to discuss with them how you could improve as a team leader.
- 4** Invest in a chocolate draw. Go round your team and ask them what kind of treats they like and then go out and buy a draw full of chocolate that they can raid when they are feeling like a boost. Whenever I visit my old work places they invariably ask if I've come back to restock the chocolate draw.
- 5** Go buy and read the book 'The New One Minute Manager' by Ken Blanchard. This easy to read parable is essential reading for anyone who manages people.
- 6** Each week take one team member out for a coffee and just get to know them. Ask them questions and listen. Ask them about their hopes and dreams. Ask them for their ideas about how to improve the team. Listen for things that you can take action on help them succeed.
- 7** As a team watch and discuss an Ed Muzio video found at <https://www.youtube.com/user/emuzio/videos>. Ed produces short and helpful videos that make great conversation starters for a team exploring how they can work better together.
- 8** Complete a 7a disciplines assessment which you can find in the resources at <http://impactfacilitation.com.au/>. Look for 'Introduction to Getting Stuff Done.'
- 9** Learn about the concept of Love Languages at <http://www.5lovelanguages.com/>. This is simply understanding how your team members feel appreciated. Each member will have a primary way of feeling valued and appreciated which fit into Gary Chapmans Five Love Languages. This is one of the most profound concepts I have ever discovered, it could literally change your life.
- 10** Mindstorm your own list of 20 actions you could take to improve your teams performance and then take action on one of them today. To learn how to Mindstorm check out <http://www.creativethinkingwith.com/Mindstorming-20-ideas-method-solo-brainstorming.html>.

11 Never have a team meeting without a written timed agenda. How many meetings have you been to that wandered on and on. By having a written agenda with time frames next to each item you can ensure that you meeting stays on task and one time. My goal is to always finish earlier than promised. If the meeting is looking like going over time then schedule another meeting. If you value people's time and keep your promises then people will come with more enthusiasm and energy to your meetings.

12 For your own professional development complete a Kolbe A index at <http://www.kolbe.com/assessments/kolbe-a-index/>. Even better get everyone of your team members to complete a Kolbe A index and then discuss how you can arrange your team tasks in light of each person's natural working style. Personally I have found the investment in the profiles profoundly helpful in building a high performance team.

13 Determine different roles for your team meetings and then rotate the roles. I prefer to have about five different roles in each team meeting which I briefly describe in a short memo I give to every new team member. We then rotate the different roles. They could be roles such as 'Time Keeper', 'Minute taker', 'Meeting Chairperson', 'Hospitality', etc. Get creative but have roles that help your team meetings be fun, be effective, and be on time.

14 Only have a team meeting if there is a clear and specific outcome for the meeting. Don't just have a meeting because it is in the calendar. It is better to cancel a meeting if there is no specific measurable outcome that makes use of people's valuable time.

15 Have a stand-up meeting. A stand-up meeting is great if there is only one thing to discuss and you want people to be focused and quick.

16 It's okay for the purpose of the meeting to be to just have some fun together. If the purpose is just to spend time as a team then take the meeting off-site or in some way change the environment. This is particular good to do when celebrating a special achievement of a team member or of the team.

17 Read a book together. Find a book the team members would like to discuss such as 'The Five Dysfunctions of a Team : An Illustrated Leadership Fable' and have over a few months have the members read a chapter at a time and come prepared to discuss what they learnt at the next meeting.

18 Develop 90 day team goals. As a team decide on 3-5 specific goals for the next 90 days that align with the team purpose. Each meeting review these goals and align the meeting agenda to help the team agree on action steps that will move the team towards these outcomes. After 90 days set a new set of 90 day goals.

19 Make an effort to specifically thank at least one team member every meeting for something they have done above and beyond their role. This can become an agenda item to help develop a culture of appreciation. Just make sure the appreciation is for a specific action. (To get the team used to this concept you might like to practice doing this one on one with team members in the weeks before you introduce it to the team.)

20 One of the great motivation myths is that people do great work if you praise them. The reality is that people feel great when they have achieved something and which is acknowledged. To help people achieve great things we need to respectfully hold them to account for when they have not kept a promise. People who are respectfully held accountable respond when you honestly praise them for their accomplishments.

21 Post a thankyou note. It is amazing how snail mail is so appreciate in this age of email and texting. So take a few minutes to write out and post to one of your team members a note of appreciation. To make it even better include a couple of movie tickets as a thank you for their efforts.

22 Do something to over deliver on a promise you have made one of your team members. You will notice this resource was called "21 things ..." but I'm giving you 22 ideas as an example over delivering. Think about something you have promised and take a step right now to over deliver.

For Team Effectiveness training or coaching contact Peter Watson (MM, B.Bus, Th.B., Dip.CS, Cert TAE) at www.impactfacilitation.com.au

